



Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	16 November 2023
Subject:	Climate & Nature Strategy 2023-2030
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Dipti Patel – Corporate Director, Place
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Community Safety
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Living Harrow: The London Borough of Harrow's Climate and Nature Strategy 2023 to 2030 (including Strategic Action Plan Appendix) Appendix 1a – Strategic Action Plan Appendix 2 - Report on Public Consultation Appendix 2a – Business Engagement Report Summary Appendix 3 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report summarises the results of the public consultation on the Climate & Nature Strategy and presents the final strategy for approval.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Note the results of the public consultation on the draft Strategy;
2. Approve the attached Climate & Nature Strategy 2023-2030;
3. Authorise the Corporate Director – Place, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Community Safety, to keep the Strategy under review and make minor amendments as are necessary; and
4. Note that progress in implementing the Strategy and accompanying Strategic Action Plan will be subject to annual reporting to Cabinet.

Reason: (for recommendations)

To provide a strategic framework for the Council and the Borough to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable the recovery of the natural world that supports us all.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2019 full Council debated a motion to declare a Climate Emergency and to resolve to ‘Aim to make the London Borough of Harrow carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption of emissions.’ The motion was approved for referral to the Executive and subsequently agreed at the meeting of Cabinet in September 2019.
- 1.2 In March 2020 the Council’s cabinet agreed an Interim Strategy and Action Plan, setting out initial short-term areas of action on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions.
- 1.3 A range of emissions reduction projects have since been planned and delivered by the Council, including an initial programme of energy and carbon saving measures across our schools, corporate buildings and housing, and the adoption of a Low Carbon Procurement Charter, Policy and Toolkit, in order to drive emissions reduction via our supply chain. Details of key work to date are set out in section 2 of the attached Strategy.

- 1.4 However, an effective response to the significant risks posed by climate change and the depletion of natural ecosystems requires a long-term strategic framework around which both the Council and our communities in Harrow can take concerted action. In April 2023 Cabinet approved the draft Climate and Nature Strategy for public consultation. This report highlights the results of the subsequent public consultation and presents the final Strategy and accompanying strategic action plan for approval.

2. Options considered

- 2.1 Do nothing: this option is not recommended. Recent scientific assessments are clear that rapid reductions in greenhouse gases are needed to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, along with action to protect natural ecosystems, and concerted local action on these issues is essential.
- 2.2 Agree the Climate and Nature Strategy: to provide a long-term strategic framework for action both as an organisation and a borough.

3. Background

An urgent need for action

- 3.1 The burning of coal, gas and oil (together known as fossil fuels) in huge quantities is increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere, causing global heating and significant disruption to our climate.
- 3.2 The most immediate consequences of this are the extreme weather events that have been experienced worldwide over recent years – including heatwaves, droughts, flooding and fires. In the summer of 2022 for example, the UK witnessed its first ever 40°C day, with some of the hottest temperatures nationally occurring in West London. Left unchecked, climate change has the potential to destabilise our planet's ecosystems and life support systems, posing a serious risk to societies here and around the world.
- 3.3 At the same time, the extractive land use practices and pollution associated with our high carbon lifestyles and economy are also contributing to the depletion and weakening of those same ecosystems upon which we depend for the essentials of life, including clean air, water and food. A 2021 study by the Natural History Museum estimated that global biodiversity and ecosystem intactness is only around 75% overall, significantly below the 90% threshold that scientists believe is safe. In the UK that figure is 53%, putting us in the bottom 10% of countries worldwide (Natural History Museum, Biodiversity Trends Explorer).

- 3.4 This is why climate change and the crisis in our natural world are two sides of the same coin and must be tackled together.

Harrow's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 3.5 The Council's measured emissions relate to the gas burned across its estate of corporate buildings and maintained schools, the electricity used in those buildings and the fuel used within its fleet of vehicles. Together these have reduced by around 40% since 2014, comprising 13,247 tonnes CO₂e in 2021/22. Data for 22/23 is being finalised but is expected to show a continuing reduction. In addition, although these are not measured directly, the Council has influence over reductions from its housing stock of 4900 homes and also via its extensive supply chain.
- 3.6 In the wider borough, for which 2019 figures are available, it is estimated that the direct emissions occurring in Harrow are around 558,000 tonnes CO₂e per annum, 30% of which are from road transport, with the remainder primarily from gas heating of buildings, of which residential buildings are the largest proportion. There are also an estimated 140,000 tonnes CO₂e of annual emissions from electricity use in the borough, over 60% of which are associated with residential buildings.
- 3.7 Further details of the emissions data for the Council and the borough, including the consumption carbon footprint of the average Harrow resident (which includes out of borough emissions), are contained within section 1 of the Strategy.
- 3.8 Overall the data reinforces a focus, both for the Council and the wider borough, on significantly reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with our buildings, transport and the things that we use and consume, particularly food.
- 3.9 Sustainable consumption habits, for example buying more re-used and remanufactured products, adopting climate friendly diets and minimising waste, will also make space for nature and reduce the pressure on ecosystems from the extraction of natural resources. Locally there are significant opportunities for the Council and residents to adopt more sensitive management practices that enable the recovery of nature both in our parks and open spaces and across the borough's extensive network of gardens and private land.

Overview of the Strategy

- 3.10 The Strategy has three parts. Section 1 sets out the background and context, both nationally and locally. Section 2 introduces the four main thematic action areas:

1. *Clean Energy Used Efficiently* – heating and powering our homes and buildings in low carbon ways;
2. *Green Mobility* –reducing our reliance on fossil fuel vehicles;
3. *A Waste Free Economy* - minimising waste and growing a sustainable and circular economy; and
4. *Healthy Places for Us and Nature* –making space for nature in our borough and building a healthy and resilient local environment.

Finally, section 3 looks at the approach to implementation of the strategy, focussing on the importance of engagement, finance and decision making, along with issues of social justice.

- 3.11 The Appendix to the Strategy then sets out the key strategic actions that have been identified across each of the four themes (Strategic Action Plan), in each case split by actions for the Council as an organisation and also actions that will influence emissions reduction and nature recovery in the wider borough.
- 3.12 The Strategy affirms the Council's aim to reach carbon neutrality as regards its measured organisational emissions by 2030, although recognises that this approach will require significant levels of investment in our buildings and fleet in a climate of changing technologies, for which new funding approaches will need to be developed and which will require an element of external investment. For the wider borough, the Strategy recognises that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions are beyond the Council's direct control and that achieving significant reductions in emissions across Harrow as a whole will therefore require concerted action from all of Harrow's residents and businesses. Whilst it will be extremely challenging to achieve a carbon neutral position for the borough as a whole by 2030, the Council has a key role to play as a convener and via its statutory services in order to encourage and support positive change across our communities. The consultation on the draft Strategy has provided an opportunity to commence that process with our residents, businesses, and partner organisations.

The co-benefits of action

- 3.13 The Strategy also identifies, within each thematic area, the many co-benefits to our communities of taking action on climate change and enabling nature to recover. These include the extensive business growth, innovation and skills opportunities arising from the net zero agenda, as well as increased local resilience to climate change and other global shocks. There are also significant public health benefits, from improvements to air quality to more active lifestyles, healthier diets and better mental health. Taken together, there is increasing evidence that the human and economic costs of inaction on climate

change and nature recovery will significantly exceed the costs of taking action now.

Engagement on the Strategy

- 3.14 The Council has an important role to play in meeting these challenges, both in terms of minimising our own emissions and impacts as an organisation, and as a key provider of public services within the borough. However, with the Council's own emissions only comprising a small percentage of the borough's as a whole, it is clear that an effective response also requires the active involvement of all in Harrow. It is therefore important that the Strategy reflects our community and their needs.
- 3.15 The Council consulted publicly on the draft Strategy between 20th June and 24th September 2023. The objectives of the engagement were:
- To share the Council's draft strategy with Harrow residents, local businesses and groups; to promote discussion, feedback and questions.
 - To understand the views of Harrow residents and local businesses and groups on climate change and nature recovery in Harrow.
 - To identify the practical actions that residents / businesses / community groups are taking, or are willing to take, and the key barriers that exist to making more sustainable choices.
 - To help the Council understand how it can support and scale existing work and initiatives around climate and nature in Harrow.
- 3.16 The core consultation activity comprised resident and business surveys undertaken on the MyHarrow Talk engagement platform. In the case of Harrow's small businesses, completion of physical surveys proved to be a much more effective engagement method, and the results were subsequently uploaded to MyHarrowTalk. The survey activity was supplemented by three town centre public drop in events, together with a range of in person events and meetings with businesses and community groups. Further details are contained in the report on the consultation activity appended to this cabinet report.
- 3.17 Throughout the consultation period there were 1660 visits to the MyHarrow Talk consultation page, with 118 resident and 58 business surveys being completed. It is estimated that engagement took place with at least an additional 250 people through online and in person events.

Consultation Feedback and Opportunities

- 3.18 A full report on the consultation activity is enclosed. The key messages and opportunity action areas highlighted by the consultation are summarised in the following sections. The opportunity areas in each thematic area are cross referenced to the relevant strategic action in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), which has been updated where appropriate.

Attitudes to Climate Change and the Environment

- 3.19 Overall the resident survey demonstrated that a clear majority of respondents were concerned about climate change, motivated to take action and believe that this should be a priority of the Council. Over three quarters were 'very concerned' about climate change and a similar proportion thought that addressing it should be a top priority for the Council. Only a small minority of 5% or less were not concerned about climate change and not motivated to take any action. However, when presented with the statement "I know what actions I can take to reduce my impact on the environment" only 46% of total respondents selected "definitely agree", with 47% indicating that they 'somewhat agree'.
- 3.20 Amongst the mainly small businesses who were surveyed, concern about impact of climate change was lower overall than the residents' sample, with just over one quarter feeling 'very concerned' and the majority (56%) being 'somewhat concerned'. One third were 'very motivated' to take action, but all businesses were motivated to some degree. Awareness of the actions that can be taken, though, was also lower than the residents' sample, with only one third definitely agreeing and 44% 'somewhat agreeing'.
- 3.21 In summary, those surveyed were concerned about climate change and the environment and were motivated to take action. Some respondents however were not fully confident about what actions they could take to reduce their impact. This underscores the importance of widely available, good quality information about the practical steps that residents, community organisations and businesses in the borough can take in their personal and professional lives. In part this was the intention of this initial engagement exercise - for example, the Grantham Institute's '9 things you can do about Climate Change' leaflets were widely distributed at the in-person events, and the surveys themselves were designed to highlight the range of actions that could be taken across the four material themes. Education on the climate change and nature recovery agendas will, though, remain an ongoing requirement that needs to be further developed through the Council's communications activity, both internally and externally.

Clean Energy Used Efficiently

- 3.22 Resident feedback highlighted that up-front costs remain a barrier to the fitting of heat pumps and solar panels, and the market is perceived as complicated. Furthermore, those living in tenanted properties have limited scope to carry out improvements themselves and are

dependent upon landlords. It was also suggested that clear guidance from the Council's planning team about what the permission requirements were for common energy and retrofit improvements would be welcomed, particularly from those living in conservation areas.

3.23 The engagement with small businesses revealed that, whilst energy costs are a significant concern, most have not undertaken any significant energy efficiency measures beyond LED lighting. Some businesses are unsure exactly how to save energy and those in leasehold premises are similarly dependent upon landlords to carry out more significant improvements.

3.24 The key opportunity action areas for this theme include:

- Promoting the new Harrow Energy Advice Line to residents and voluntary organisations (new SAP 8.3 inserted)
- Signposting to the Energy Saving Trust and reliable advice on retrofit and improving insulation levels in homes and business premises, highlighting the cost-saving benefits (SAP 8.2 inserted)
- Considering how landlords can be incentivised to improve insulation levels and install solar and heat pump technologies in homes / business premises (within the scope of SAP 8.1)
- Developing clear planning guidance on retrofit, including conservation areas (within the scope of SAP 9.3 as amended)
- Case studies to illustrate energy saving measures that could be carried out by small businesses and the benefits of doing so (now referenced in SAP 8.1)

Green Mobility

3.25 Resident feedback consistently highlighted a willingness to consider cycling as a healthy and cost-effective alternative to the private car (whilst also noting that cycling is not suitable for all members of the community, for example the elderly). However, it is considered that the private car is currently prioritised in Harrow and there is a lack of suitable segregated infrastructure, and properly connected routes, to cycle safely in Harrow. Lower levels of cycle storage in parks and at public facilities, and the absence of a bicycle or EV bike hire scheme was also a limiting factor.

A need was expressed for more publicly accessible electric vehicle infrastructure, especially on streets for those without dedicated off street parking at home, and there was support for the introduction of car share schemes, which was an option a significant number of survey respondents would be willing to consider.

There was also support expressed for expanding school streets (noting that some other neighbouring boroughs have more) and increased communications to highlight the environmental damage and health impacts caused by fossil fuel vehicles whilst promoting active travel alternatives.

- 3.26 Business feedback reiterated that some roads are congested, and cycle lanes are considered poor and not connected. Also, the embodied carbon and circular economy impact of electric cars and vans, compared to traditional vehicles is not well known. It would be useful for good quality information to be made available about these issues to inform individual decision making. There are also a large number of small logistics movements in Harrow currently undertaken by vans and other goods vehicles that could benefit from the introduction of cargo bike / e-cargo bike delivery services.
- 3.27 The key opportunity action areas for this theme include:
- Development of more connected, safer cycle infrastructure (and walking routes) across Harrow, combined with installation of cycle storage at key public sites / buildings. Also continued working with Harrow Cycle Hub to promote the benefits of cycling and consideration of trialling a bike hire / e bike hire scheme in selected locations (within the scope of SAP 6.1 and 6.2)
 - Expanding the car club offering on council land (within SAP 5.5)
 - Communications that explain the benefits of active travel, including the air quality health benefits (SAP 5.3 amended)
 - Improving air quality monitoring and data capture in Harrow, to include areas of high fossil fuel vehicle use, to inform target setting (SAP 5.3 amended)
 - Developing a long-term plan for EV charging expansion to include both residential slow charging and rapid chargers, combined with good quality information to residents and businesses about the switch to EVs (within the scope of SAP 5.2 and upcoming borough Electric Vehicle Strategy)
 - Improving the Highways infrastructure environment (including tree planting / biodiversity enhancements) to encourage more active travel. There is an immediate opportunity to do so through the upcoming Harrow Town Centre improvement scheme (within SAP 6.3, 9.3 and 9.4)
 - Consider trialling cargo bike / e-cargo bike delivery services in areas of high demand (SAP 7.2 amended)

3.28 Feedback from residents highlighted the work of Harrow Litter Pickers and urged greater levels of joint working with the council, including on behaviour change and tackling a culture of littering and waste that exists in some parts of the borough. Respondents asked for better information on where the borough's waste goes and how to recycle difficult items (e.g., film and textiles). There were also comments on the lack of infrastructure to recycle in the borough beyond the Household Waste and Recycling Centre, whilst noting that contamination can be an issue in these locations.

There was support for greater leasing / hiring options for goods, which could include establishing a Library of Things in Harrow. A low awareness was reported of the TRAIID doorstep textiles / electricals collection service that is currently available to residents.

3.29 Business feedback indicated that, whilst there is appetite for working with the Council to reduce waste and increase recycling, the Council's trade waste service is considered to be more expensive than using some private companies. There is also a perception amongst businesses that booking restrictions at local waste recycling centres have contributed to increased fly-tipping and litter being dumped on streets and on business premises, which makes the high street less attractive and impacts on business. Generally, there is relatively low awareness amongst businesses of the circular economy and the financial and other benefits that can accrue from minimising waste and embracing circular business models.

3.30 The key opportunity action areas for this theme include:

- Improving education and communications about the impact of waste, the importance of sustainable food consumption (e.g. the Eat Like a Londoner Campaign), recycling, and repair (within SAP 5.1, 5.2 and 6.1)
- Further promotion of the TRAIID doorstep textile / electricals collection service for residents (SAP 5.3 updated)
- Considering a suitable location and funding model for a Library of Things in Harrow (within the scope of SAP 5.1 to 5.3)
- Continuing to develop the relationship and opportunities for collaboration with Harrow Litter Pickers (within SAP 5.1 as amended)
- Utilising ongoing business support programmes to help small businesses understand what they waste, and why (simple waste audit) and support for embedding circular economy principles into their operations (within SAP 4.1 and 4.2)
- Reviewing the Council's commercial waste service, to ensure the offering is competitive and supports the objectives of this Strategy (SAP 4.3 added)

- Promoting development of repair skills in Harrow, to encourage repair rather than disposal of common items such as bicycles, clothes and electrical goods (within SAP 5.3 and 5.8)

Healthy Places for us and Nature

3.31 Residents expressed support for continuing to actively improve biodiversity in our parks, open spaces, housing areas and verges, working closely with volunteer groups. There was also support for more tree planting in the borough's streets, open spaces and private gardens, together with a need to develop a stronger vision for Nature in the borough, accompanied by the setting of clear targets for nature recovery across Harrow, which are currently lacking. Harrow Nature Conservation Forum and Harrow Wildlife Action submitted a detailed response pledging their support for the further development of these areas.

Concern about concretisation of front and rear gardens and removal of hedges / plants by owners also came up repeatedly in survey responses from individual residents, as did the need to secure nature positive outputs from new developments – swift bricks, green rooves etc.

3.32 Business engagement on this theme overall highlighted a disconnect in the understanding that all businesses are eventually reliant on a healthy ecosystem. However, whilst local businesses do not currently consider a healthy natural environment as being linked directly to their business resilience or success, they do link unsightly waste in public spaces as being negative for business. Most small companies in the borough would benefit from a greater understanding of their supply chain, their ultimate reliance on nature, and then the climate risks that exist in the locations where their suppliers of goods and services are based.

3.33 The key opportunity action areas for this theme include:

- Expanding biodiversity projects on council open spaces, parks and verges (noting the importance of choosing the right site and good communications), to include upskilling of the Green Team (New SAP 3.3 and existing SAP 7.3)
- Working with existing volunteers involved in nature and conservation activities to showcase their work and expand volunteer participation (Within existing SAP 4.4 as amended)
- Better signposting of residents to our parks, open spaces and nature events, also highlighting the actions that individuals can take

to enable the recovery of nature in their own private spaces (within SAP 4.1 and 4.2)

- Developing a medium and long-term vision for nature and natural capital in Harrow working with Harrow Nature Conservation Forum and other local groups, informed by good data and target setting (new SAP 4.6 and 6.4)
- Developing our Local Plan in a way that reserves space for nature and consider the levers available to the Council to tackle the concretisation of gardens (Existing SAP 5.1 and new SAP 5.4)
- Raising awareness with local businesses of supply chain risks and ecosystem dependencies as part of Harrow's business support programmes, to include consideration of a relevant case study (eg a local restaurant business) (New SAP 4.7)

General Comments

3.34 The Strategy was welcomed by a clear majority of respondents to the consultation, who felt that the overall scope of the four thematic areas was comprehensive. A number of additional overarching points were raised, including:

- The key convening role of the council to bring together community initiatives that tackle climate change and nature using its existing borough networks (voluntary sector, statutory partners, faith groups, schools).
- The central importance of education and active, culturally inclusive, communications to and from residents and businesses, and within the Council itself, across all of the thematic areas.
- Governance and decision making: consideration of climate and nature impacts needs to be better embedded in council decision making.
- It was noted that young people and schools have a crucial role in terms of influencing behaviours now and in the future.
- The impact of food and climate friendly diet choices has relatively low awareness (although some communities are already vegetarian) but has large role in emissions.
- It was noted that the effect of climate changes that are already 'locked in' are yet to be fully felt, therefore the development of resilience and adaptation measures that also build the borough's natural capital (eg tree planting and nature based solutions to increase flood resilience and combat drought) will be crucial, alongside mitigation through carbon reductions.

- 3.35 Key challenge and opportunity areas arising from the general comments include:
- Consideration of how the Council can facilitate ongoing engagement on climate and nature issues with residents and businesses across its full range of services, building upon this initial consultation (an ambition now reflected in 3.1 of the Strategy)
 - The introduction of core training on climate change and nature for all staff and members, to raise corporate awareness of the issues, highlight how different service areas can contribute and build organisational capacity to take action (now included in 3.2 of the Strategy)
 - Development of guidelines to ensure consideration of climate and nature impacts as part of all cabinet decision making (now included in 3.2 of the Strategy)
 - Increasing organisational capacity and staffing to deal with adaptation and resilience issues (to be considered as part of SAP 5.3)

Strategy and Strategic Action Plan and Next Steps

- 3.36 The thematic action areas within the Strategic Action Plan have been updated where needed as set out above, in light of the key recommendations from the consultation phase. Section 3 of the Strategy has also been updated to reflect the general comments, as set out above.
- 3.37 Overall the response to the consultation indicated that the scope of the Strategy and its four thematic areas provides a comprehensive overall framework for action, and no changes are therefore proposed to this structure. It is however noted that target setting and specific actions to achieve the outcomes needs to be further developed under the strategic action areas as part of the next phase of work.
- 3.38 The Council can't action all that has come from this consultation; much of this work needs to be led within communities themselves, and the findings show that there is a lot being done and significant motivation to do more, which is very encouraging. However the Council does have a critical role as a convener of residents and local groups, bringing together current initiatives and community projects and helping to highlight and share these with residents. As such, important that the Council treats the consultation as the beginning, not the end, of meaningful engagement on these issues with our communities.
- 3.39 Once approved, the Strategic Action Plan will be progressed by responsible delivery teams under the oversight of the Council's Climate and Sustainability Board, with regular internal reporting to the Portfolio

Holder and other responsible cabinet members. This next phase of action development will include consideration of relevant data, target setting in key areas and available resources and capacity. It is intended that progress on delivering the Strategic Action Plan will be reported annually to the Council's cabinet, together with any required recommendations for consideration.

4. Implications of the recommendations

Environmental implications

4.1 Environmental implications are integral to the subject matter of this report.

Risk Management Implications

4.2 Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. N/A

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
<p>A failure to take significant steps to address organisational and borough wide greenhouse gas emissions will contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks to health, well-being and productivity arising from high temperatures and more frequent droughts • Increased flooding and property damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Climate and Nature Strategy presented with this report provides a strategic framework under which the Council and the wider borough's communities can plan and take positive local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help enable the recovery of the natural world. 	<p>AMBER</p>

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks to global and local natural capital essential for the functioning of society, including ecosystems, soils and biodiversity • Migration pressures and international security issues • Economic contraction and instability • Increase in fuel and other types of poverty for residents 		
<p>The strategy is inflexible and cannot be adapted quickly to meet unforeseen and/or changing circumstances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The strategy proposes high level strategic action areas that are intended to be comprehensive at a strategic level but allow for operational flexibility as to how actions are implemented ▪ Progress on the strategy and any need to revise or amend it will be monitored on on-going basis throughout the year by the Climate and Sustainability Board ▪ Implementation of the strategy will be reported annually to Cabinet along with any updates and necessary amendments 	GREEN
<p>Roles and responsibilities (individually and in groups) for delivering the strategy across the Council are not clearly allocated or assigned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategic Action Plan sets the teams within the Council for responsible for progressing relevant action areas ▪ The Climate and Sustainability Board will oversee the strategy and ensure all officers and groups are contributing and fully engaged on the strategy. 	GREEN

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
<p>Arrangements for the performance management of the strategy, including for SMART target-setting on the strategy, have not yet been clarified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A climate change action tracker and performance monitor will be established to develop, monitor and report on the setting and achievement of targets in specific action areas ▪ The Council's carbon emissions are monitored by energy and fuel usage and will be reported to Cabinet annually 	<p style="text-align: center;">AMBER</p>
<p>The Strategy does not adequately identify and prioritise the key areas where action is required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key data sets around emissions as a council and as a borough have been identified in the Strategy and directly inform the areas of action. ▪ A number of other London local authority climate strategies have been reviewed in the preparation of the draft Strategy, and the strategic actions have been developed with input from relevant council service areas. ▪ The Strategy has also now been subject to public consultation (considered in this report) to help ensure the Strategy reflects local challenges and opportunities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">AMBER</p>
<p>The draft Strategy is unaffordable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many of the strategic action areas can be incorporated within, and supported by, existing Council service delivery. ▪ The strategy acknowledges the significant financing challenges that accompany the high-level of capital investment that 	<p style="text-align: center;">AMBER</p>

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
	<p>is required over coming years particularly in building retrofit and electrification of vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the Council as an organisation this will require a significant element of external financing, building upon existing grant successes, as well as different approaches to the valuation of benefits (including whole life costings and consideration of avoidance of future costs). 	

Procurement Implications

- 4.4 Responsible and sustainable procurement is integral to the delivery of the recommendations of this report. The Council has a considerable procurement spend and a very large third-party supply chain delivering works, goods and services. In recognition of this the Council, along with other West London Alliance councils, has developed and adopted a Low Carbon Procurement Charter, Policy and Toolkit in order to drive emissions reduction via our supply chain. This was implemented in 2022, when the Council introduced compulsory questions for major new procurements to test bidders' ability to deliver emissions reductions through contracts.

Any procurement of works or services required pursuant to the strategic action plan will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and, as applicable, The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or successor legislation.

Legal Implications

- 4.5 The Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) imposes a duty on the government to ensure that by 2050 net carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are reduced by at least 100% when compared to 1990 levels. In other words, the UK has committed to reach a net zero carbon position by 2050. In April 2021 the government further committed to an interim target, as set out in the Sixth Carbon Budget, to reach a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035.

There is no specific legal requirement for local authorities to set their own local targets, although they are free to do so. However, they do

need to comply with a range of environmental and planning legislation, which together contribute to meeting the government's national commitments. In addition, in London local authorities need to observe a range of mayoral policies, guidance and funding requirements which all contribute to the GLA's adopted 2030 net zero target for the capital as set out in the Mayor's London Environment Strategy.

Furthermore, the recommended actions set out in the Climate and Nature Strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable the recovery of the natural world will go a long way in helping the Council discharge its statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Financial Implications

- 4.6 Whilst it is increasingly recognised that the costs to our economy and public services of inaction on climate change and ecosystem recovery will significantly exceed the costs of action, in the short and medium term it must be acknowledged that the delivery of net zero, both nationally and locally, is dependent upon unprecedented levels of private and public funding that represent a significant challenge in the current financial climate.
- 4.7 The capital costs to the Council for example of moving to an electric fleet so far as possible in 2022 (excluding minibuses as vehicles were not readily available in the mainstream market) were estimated to be around £20 million. Similarly, a comprehensive programme of energy efficiency upgrades, solar PV installations and heat pump replacements to the majority of our maintained schools and corporate buildings would require a level of investment of at least £35 million at today's prices. As there is currently limited provision in either the capital programme or the MTFs, the Council will need to carefully plan for progressive and prioritised investment in both of these key areas with detailed analysis of costs and benefits including analysis of full life costings, avoidance of other costs, energy efficiency savings, and levels of external investment.
- 4.8 To date the Council has successfully been awarded £2.4 million of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding that has been applied, together with match funding from our capital programme, towards a £4.2 million investment in seven school and corporate sites. In March 2023 we also received notification of a successful bid for over £2 million of funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, to be used as part of a £5 million project towards our housing stock. For the 2023-25 period, the Council has also successfully secured over £400,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to support the establishment of an Energy Advice Service for residents and the voluntary sector, along with a programme of biodiversity enhancement

projects and increased community volunteering opportunities, in our parks and open spaces.

- 4.9 The Council currently has £500,000 per annum allocated in its capital programme for each of the coming three financial years directly to decarbonisation projects, mainly energy related projects to public buildings. Levels of investment in decarbonisation of our estate from 24/25 onwards, including prioritisation of projects according to current building condition and boiler age, will be informed by decisions as regards the future of individual estate assets to be made further to the Corporate Asset Strategy.
- 4.10 The Borough and Neighbourhood components of the Community Infrastructure Levy, collected via the planning process, also have significant potential to be applied to improve the borough's blue and green infrastructure and contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation. Making the most of future external funding opportunities, combined with strategic match funding through the Council's existing capital programme, will be a key part of our approach to meeting this funding challenge going forwards.

Equalities Implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 4.11 The risks posed by climate change and ecosystem depletion have the potential to impact the most vulnerable in our societies disproportionately, as those individuals and groups can lack the means to adapt to the economic and physical impacts.
- 4.12 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been prepared, which accompanies this report and which has been updated in light of the consultation feedback. This shows that the elderly, disabled, and women, including pregnant women, may be particularly impacted by extreme weather events and other environmental impacts such as low air quality. The elderly and disabled can also be particularly vulnerable to issues such as fuel poverty when energy prices rise and may not be able to access green travel solutions such as walking, cycling and public transport. It will be necessary to ensure these groups are protected. This includes ensuring ongoing access to green vehicular options for travel within Harrow for the elderly and disabled and providing access to energy advice and support, for example via the newly introduced Harrow Energy Advice service. Improvements to Harrow's air quality monitoring and data capture will also enable the Council to better target action on areas of poor air quality, for the particular benefit of vulnerable residents within the protected groups.
- 4.13 Whilst the Council must take into consideration the disproportionate effects of climate change on some protected groups, it is also clear that helping to mitigate climate change and enabling the recovery of nature are universal issues upon which all individuals have opportunities to

take action in their daily lives and within their own sphere of influence. Wide and meaningful participation in this common, shared endeavour also therefore represents a significant opportunity to help break down barriers and foster good relations between people from different groups.

5. Council Priorities

- 5.1 The Strategy presented with this report aims to deliver a just transition to a low carbon and Nature-positive borough. It will help deliver the Council's vision of *Restoring Pride in Harrow* by realising the opportunities of new jobs and investment, improved health, wellbeing and education, and a thriving environment for local people.
- 5.2 All four of the key action areas identified in the Strategy support the delivery of the Council's Priority of *A Borough that is Clean and Safe*, with the just transition supporting the Priority *A Place where Those in Need are Supported*.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jessie Man

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 26 October 2023

Statutory Officer: Abiodun Kolawole

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 24 October 2023

Chief Officer: Dipti Patel

Signed off by the Corporate Director

Date: 26 October 2023

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 23 October 2023

Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns

Signed on behalf of the Interim Head of Internal Audit

Date: 26 October 2023

Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO as it impacts on all Wards

EqlA carried out: YES

EqlA cleared by: Jennifer Rock

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Matthew Adams, Assistant Director - Climate Change & Natural Resources matthew.adams@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: No